Research Report

Evaluation Report on the Transcona-Springfield School Division/AFM Partnership

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&
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June 2002

ADDICTIONS FOUNDATION OF MANITOBA

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Addictions Foundation of Manitoba

Research and Quality Monitoring

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Transcona-Springfield School Division/AFM Partnership Pilot Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fall of 2001 the Transcona Springfield School Division proposed a partnership with the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba to help increase the capacity of the school division to cope with addiction related issues in the community. In January 2002 a planning session was conducted to clarify the goals of the project and share the developmental process with the school counselors, teachers and administrative personnel. A Prevention Education Consultant who had previous experience with this type of work was hired, and an evaluation process was developed at this point. This report is a result of that process. The Consultant provided a variety of workshops and information sessions to parents, students and school counselors, in addition to linking school staff with resources such as handouts and videos. Overall, the workshops were well received and both staff and parents found the information useful. The majority of the students also found the information useful. However, a few expressed some disappointment with the small numbers of attendees for some of the presentations. A focus group with the school counselors at the end of the project elicited useful feedback. The Consultant was seen as a useful and important addition to the capacity of the school to cope with addiction issues, and was widely commended for her flexibility and support. The main criticism related to the time constraints under which the project operated, which suggests the need to begin the planning process early in the school year, if not prior to students arriving in the fall. The second main recommendation is the need to consider allocating additional resources in order for a Consultant to also provide clinical services to students at risk for developing problems due to the substance use. Subsequent interest in the project from other school divisions indicates that this type of partnering may be a direction to pursue in the future. The evaluation of the TSSD/AFM project indicates that intersectoral partnerships in the area of student education and addictions can be beneficial for both parties, and have positive impacts on the capacity of the school division to provide more comprehensive services to the community.

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Acknowledgements

A number of people contributed substantially to this report and to the project itself. These include the administrative staff of the school division, the school counselors and the AFM youth prevention and education workers who contributed to the project. Most importantly, the Assistant Superintendent of the school division, Dianne Phillips, initiated the planning process behind the project and is ultimately responsible for its success. Her vision has produced a model that may become a template for the delivery of addiction services to students in Winnipeg.

Transcona-Springfield School Division/ Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Partnership

INTRODUCTION

Transcona-Springfield School Division (TSSD), similar to other Manitoba urban and rural School Divisions, has long recognized the impact of alcohol/other drug and gambling issues on the lives of their students and family members, as well as on the community as a whole. In an effort to become more proactive in identifying and responding to these issues, TSSD approached the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM) in the fall of 2001 proposing a partnership project. Specifically, using current-year Divisional resources, AFM was requested to hire, train and provide ongoing support to a half-time staff position dedicated to prevention and education initiatives within the Division and the larger community of Transcona Springfield. The overall goal of the project was articulated as follows: "*To develop the capacity of the School Division and its surrounding community to provide prevention, education and intervention services targeted to youth alcohol, other drugs and gambling issues.*"

A half-time Prevention Education Consultant was hired in January 2002. Key areas of responsibility, in line with the overall project goal, were identified as follows:

1. To provide professional development to Divisional staff regarding youth alcohol/other drug/gambling issues, addressing a continuum of service from prevention to intervention and rehabilitation;
2. To engage in community outreach to deliver presentations and workshops, and to liaise and consult with other allied youth community professionals;
3. To deliver educational sessions to community parents/caregivers;
4. To compile relevant resource materials targeted to students, school staff, allied community professionals and parents/caregivers to ensure that target groups have access to current information regarding prevention/education and rehabilitation services.

Project planning and evaluation model.

In early January 2002, representatives of the AFM were invited to attend a meeting with administrators and school counselors and teachers from the Transcona-Springfield School Division (TSSD). The AFM was represented by the Director of Winnipeg Region (Roberta Coulter), the Supervisor of Youth Community-based programs (Laura Goossen) and a member of the Research and Quality Monitoring Unit (David Patton). The TSSD was represented by the Assistant Superintendent (Diane Phillips), Early Years, Middle Years and Senior Years consultants, in addition to principals and counselors from a variety of schools.

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the program to the counselors, and to hear their feedback about the types of alcohol/drug/gambling services that they needed. David Patton led the group through an exercise designed to elicit feedback about their expectations and needs, and how these would relate to the project goals. Approximately 12 goals were identified. Most of these focused on parent/student and staff education about drugs, the need to identify accurate information, the need for "best practices" with regards to dealing with current users, linking with community programs and early year programs, and advocacy and shaping school policy with regards to alcohol and drug rehabilitation services. At that time it was agreed that this long list of substantive goals could not be accomplished within a half-time position funded for less than a six-month time period. As a result, the focus of the Prevention Education Consultant (PEC) was identified as follows: "*To help staff and parents engage in capacity building with youth in the community by acting as a resource and support for staff and parents*". It was agree that the PEC would not be used as a counselor, seeing individual students with drug problems, but would best be used in a role to help counselors identify resources that would enable them to function more effectively in a counseling capacity.

Following this initial meeting an Evaluation Advisory Committee was struck, with members selected by the Assistant Superintendent. Members included counselors from schools representing Middle Years and Senior Years consultants, an Early Years principal, School Division Education Support Services, and staff from AFM, including the Consultant. Although the purpose of this meeting was to establish guidelines for the evaluation of the project, it was noted that the project scope and objectives were still unclear. Therefore, AFM Research and Quality Monitoring in the role of evaluator led the development of the evaluation plan and assisted to clarify the project objectives and activities.

The evaluation plan was based on what could realistically be accomplished within a half time, six-month position while maintaining consistency with the needs of the school division. The identified outcome goal in the end was: "To develop the capacity of the school division to provide prevention and education about addictions". This goal would be achieved through four processes:

1. Pulling together (and producing, when required) resource material for counselors
2. Providing educational workshops for counselors
3. Sharing best practices for intervention with students having difficulties with drug-related issues
4. Identifying and linking staff, parents and students with other resources in the community.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Workshops and Group Presentations

On February 1, 2002 the first of four school counselor workshops was conducted. This workshop, "Responding to addictions-related problems among students", was conducted at Murdoch MacKay School. The Consultant acted as a workshop coordinator and co-presenter with Barry Fogg from AFM's Youth Community-based Unit. Nine counselors and 2 AFM staff attended. There had not been an opportunity to discuss the workshop agenda prior to the event as this was a scheduled in-service for the school counselors. Both the Consultant and PEC colleague identified the workshop topics based on their sense of what might be most helpful to counselors.

The workshop agenda addressed: Soliciting the views of the counselors and sharing the views of AFM and of AFM Youth Unit with regards to youth alcohol/other drug/gambling issues, and how to best address the needs of the school staff. The counselors were asked to first fill out an evaluation form, which was meant to provide a baseline for the description, quality and quantity of information /resources they currently use and questions regarding information/resources they would want in the future. The counselors were then asked to define alcohol and/or drug problems as they see them, what is needed to address this problem, what skills and resources they themselves need, and what needs to happen within their school/community.

To initiate the presentation, the counselors were asked to form small groups and discuss three key areas: How they would define the problem being addressed in the project, what needed to happen to address the problem, and what they needed. These views were then shared with all the workshop participants. The views of AFM and of the AFM Youth Unit were also shared through the mission statement, core values, 'Youth Services Beliefs', the current model of alcohol and/or drug rehabilitation held by AFM, 2001 AFM High School Student Survey results, and results from Ontario's 2001 Student Drug Use Survey. There was also a brief introduction to the response strategies and tools used to address alcohol/other drug issues, such as 'Motivational Interviewing' and 'Stages of Change Model'. The presenters had used several overheads and distributed booklets summarizing the workshop. Health Canada's report, *Best practices in Youth AOD Treatment*, and was also made available.

There was frustration expressed by some school counselors in attendance in response to being asked to fill out the evaluation questionnaire. The majority of questionnaires were not filled out since some felt they already answered similar questions in previous meetings, and some felt the questions were too broad. Similar frustration was expressed when counselors were asked to identify their needs and concerns. The topics of the workshop were received relatively well. The workshop participants expressed great

interest in future workshops topics that would enable the counselors to learn more 'hands-on' tools, to "give us something we can use".

The second school counselor workshop "Risk versus Resiliency and Motivational Interviewing" was conducted on February 7th, 2002. The Consultant acted as a workshop coordinator and co-presented along with Barry Fogg. Eleven counselors, two ESS consultants, and one AFM staff attended this workshop at Regent Park School. The topic, which included material on effective counseling strategies, was based upon discussion with counselors from the first workshop.

The workshop's agenda topics included: a presentation on the differences between risk and resiliency and a presentation on motivational interviewing. The presentation on risk and resiliency included information on identifying the protective factors that safeguard against alcohol/drug use and how to build resiliency in children who are at risk for alcohol and drug use. The 'motivational interviewing' portion of the workshop was focused on describing how this counseling technique is a way to target and work with the ambivalence that many counselors see in their work with students. The 'stages of change' model was described as a way to view change as a normal process, and suggested the use of appropriate strategies matched to the stage of change an individual is in, in order to maximize moving forward in the change process. Group discussion occurred in the form of a question and answer period instead of several small group discussions as the small group discussions had proved unsuccessful in the previous workshop.

During this time, additional requests for information were made. The counselors requested information on parent education programs that help parents learn to encourage youth to make healthy choices. Some counselors also requested specific worksheets for counselors to use with youth clients. The Consultant addressed this by providing counselors with this material at a later date. Positive discussions were generated at the end of the workshop and supportive feedback was received from the counselors.

The next workshop was conducted on March 11, 2002, and included general information on alcohol and drugs, signs and symptoms of use and methods of intervention. Transcona Collegiate Institute staff and administration had requested the topics at a prior meeting with the Consultant and had specifically asked for effective ways to intervene with students. Also, some staff members had concerns regarding legal responsibilities that were discussed in this forum. Members of the audience included 3 administrators and 39 teachers from a variety of academic departments. Generally, there were positive responses from the audience, however many suggested that there was not adequate time set aside to address the questions that the presentation had generated. Nevertheless, school staff felt that the handouts would be useful for in-classroom use.

The third counselor workshop was conducted on April 4th, 2002, on the topic of "Children and families at risk", addressing strategies for working with affected children/families. This workshop was conducted at Bernie Wolfe School. Attendees included 18 counselors and 1 administrator. The counselors had requested topics for this presentation at the previous counselor workshop. The Consultant prepared a presentation with overhead material as well as a video. The video "Reflections in the heart of a child" was used to

generate discussion of the effects of living with an alcoholic. This video was well received and many counselors felt that it was beneficial. Many of those who attended felt that staff should now have a better awareness of the impact on children of living in an alcoholic home. For example, staff would be able to learn about the behavioral consequences of the affected children introduced in the video, and the different roles a child might take in order to cope in such an environment. There was also discussion around the "invisible child", the child who cannot be easily identified via the behavioral roles outlined earlier in the workshop. The Consultant provided guidelines for classroom teachers, and recommendations on working with affected children.

A workshop was conducted on April 9th for the Natural Helpers at Murdoch MacKay. Attendees included 43 Natural Helper students and a guidance counselor. For this particular audience the workshop was designed to be loosely structured, with a wide variety of resources available in anticipation of student driven discussions. It was felt by the Consultant that this method of presenting would be the most effective since there was little opportunity to discuss topic options with the students before this workshop. The Consultant felt that much more success, measured by usefulness of the information to the audience, could be achieved by preparing for a wide variety of information requests instead of relying on second hand information about the needs of the students. An informal format was also seen as more suitable for a student audience. The broad range of discussions in this workshop covered the following areas: strategies to help a friend affected by drugs or alcohol, general alcohol and drug information, gambling, and FAS. This group was interested in several topics (alcohol, drugs and gambling), and also identified problem gambling as an area of concern. They requested more information sessions. The Murdoch MacKay guidance counselor requested another workshop with the Natural Helper group before the end of the 2002 school year. Overall, students exhibited high interest in the workshop topics, and consequently there were many questions and good discussions. The audience-driven, presentation format seemed to work well in building a relationship with this group, and proved to be effective in generating interest and contributing to knowledge.

On April 12th, 2002, a workshop was conducted at a "New middle years curriculum committee" meeting at Bernie Wolfe School. Attendees included 2 administrators and 15 teachers. The Consultant was asked to make a presentation focusing on changes to the physical education and health curriculum. Specifically, she was asked to provide information about the types of resources and information on alcohol and drug related topics appropriate for the new curriculum. A list of the materials available through the AFM such as the "Your Choice--Our Chance Series", "Tuning Into Health", the "Manitoba Addictions Awareness Week" kit, "Tough Kids and Substance Abuse", and Frontier School Division's "Making the Right Choices" was provided. She also provided information on programs in other provinces and the U.S that provide information appropriate for use. These included Alberta's "Sense and Nonsense", Ontario's "FIT", and Seattle's "Here's Looking at you 2000". A list of related websites was also provided. Other information was included that related to matching materials to specific learning outcomes in the curriculum framework.

A Natural Helper workshop was conducted on April 16th at Transcona Collegiate. Attendees included 8 students, 1 teacher and 1 counselor. The audience-driven format was much the same as the April 9th Natural Helper presentation at Murdoch MacKay. Topics were similar to the April 9th workshop with information provided on how to help an affected friend, how and when to refer someone to a counselor, 'stages of change' model, a tool to assess levels of involvement with alcohol/other drugs and gambling, and maintaining self-care. The informal, audience driven format of the workshop was beneficial given the small turnout. Many questions and discussions were generated. Such discussion topics included strategies on helping a reluctant person who denies s/he has a problem. The small turnout resulted from the fact there were many activities being held at the same time, therefore the timing of the workshop could have been planned more strategically, when students were less busy. The Consultant also felt that if the workshop were less visible the reluctance on the part of the students would have decreased, resulting in higher turnout. There was interest expressed in scheduling another session for the fall due to lack of time remaining in the current school year.

On April 25th a 'Parent Information Session' was conducted on "Parenting For Prevention: Helping Your Child Make Healthy Choices", at Arthur Day School. Although there were 40 registrations, only 19 parents, 2 administrators, 2 counselors actually attended. School staff were somewhat disappointed by the discrepancy, however, the Consultant indicated that this turnout was consistent with her experience elsewhere with this sort of presentation to the public. The topics in the workshop included: Effective communication strategies, steps to help your teen say 'no' to alcohol/drug/gambling involvement, website resource information as well as information on additional resources.

The presentation topic was geared to preventing children from making unhealthy decisions about alcohol/other drugs and gambling, via the effective strategy of educating parents on the use of effective communication skills. This event was heavily advertised by the event's planning committee. Many of the planning committee members were surprised at the low turnout given the advertising efforts. This experience helped to build staff knowledge in two areas: Identifying relevant topics for parents and organizing a community outreach event tailored to a range of parents in the Transcona-Springfield area. Post-event evaluations showed that some parents were surprised at the choice of topics, and there was some concern expressed that the topics reflected negatively on their parenting skills. Some parents expected to receive information on substances especially on the 'newer' street drugs, which contrasted with a presentation on effective communication skills.

Nevertheless, the majority (88%) of parents rated the information in the session as "somewhat" or "very" helpful and relevant to themselves. About half said they learned "some" or a "lot" of new information. Almost all parents (94%) said they could use this information to help their children make healthy choices about substance use, and 88% said the session "somewhat or very much" met their expectations. The remaining 12% of parents who said the session did not meet their expectations stated that they wanted to learn more about detailed information about drugs and their effects on children. Parents were also asked what topics they would like to see in the future that were related to

substance use. Some suggestions for information sessions included: Peer pressure, healthy coping strategies for stress, detailed information on drugs, sexual activity, hormones and adolescents, how to increase self-esteem, how to communicate with adolescents, and the effects of drugs on children.

On April 29th, 2002, a large workshop was conducted for Murdoch MacKay staff. Attendees included 3 administrators and 42 teachers. Topics included general alcohol and other drug information, signs and symptoms of drug use, stages of change, and levels of involvement. Participants were made aware of resources within their school through the school counselor. They requested information to address intervention concerns (e.g., when they have to report to police) and on the School Division substance use policy. Administrators were on hand to address some of these concerns. Staff also wanted to know the long and short-term effects of street drugs on children. Post-workshop evaluations showed that the staff was receptive to the information provided and were interested in having additional presentations on alcohol and other drug use.

The fourth and final counselor Workshop was conducted on May 2 at Bernie Wolfe School. Attendees included 19 school counselors. This workshop dealt with how to provide information and resources to parents. Materials given out included prevention and intervention information for parents, how to increase awareness about alcohol and drug issues, dispelling myths about drug use, and effective strategies for coping with adolescent drug use. A video, "Nothing to Rave About", was shown and this generated substantial discussion. Evaluations indicated that the majority of the counselors (95%) felt the workshop was "very useful" and relevant, with most feeling that they learned "some" or "a lot" of new information. All counselors felt that they could use this information to help students make healthier choices about substance use. The group appeared to be interested in current videos suitable for classroom discussion. Some felt that the biggest challenge was dealing with kids whose parents are also using alcohol/other drugs, and some expressed a need for more community resources. Counselors talked about the past 4 workshops; and they stated that they greatly appreciated the resources and materials provided to address different topic areas. Many expressed interest in continuation of the project next year, and many have said that it is important to have this consistency of service.

On May 15th, the Consultant conducted a workshop with the Dugald school Grade 5 classroom students organized by the Dugald Anola Community Networker, Debbie Pokoinik. Workshop topics included general information on alcohol and drugs, defining problem use, and myths and attitudes of substance use. A video "What's wrong with beer", was shown. This workshop was designed to reinforce alcohol and drug information already taught by the classroom teacher. Attendees included 20 children, 1 teacher and 1 community support networker. Good classroom discussion was generated and the students were quite knowledgeable in this area, which probably reflects the efforts of the teacher at this school. Post workshop evaluation showed that the teacher and the children were quite positive towards the material presented and both expressed interest in future presentations.

On May 21st , 2002, a workshop was conducted for students at Arthur Day School. This was a 'middle years lunch hour workshop'. Although 22 students had signed up for the workshop only 3 students and 1 counselor attended. The format and the topics were identical to that of the Peer-Helper workshops in April. Students requested more information on how to deal with substance issues in a relationship. Following the workshop, and in response to the poor turnout the school counselor suggested that classroom presentations might be more effective since they may be seen as less threatening. The counselor also expressed that more planning, possibly a work plan around the implementation of prevention programs for the future, may be beneficial.

A Natural Helper workshop on youth problem gambling occurred on May 22nd at Murdoch MacKay School. A Youth PEC from AFM co-presented with the Consultant. Attendees included 22 students, a teacher and a counselor. Topics included defining the problem, explaining randomness in games of chance, how gambling problems develop, and how to prevent gambling problems. Topics for this presentation had been identified at a previous Natural Helper workshop where students expressed interest in this subject. There was good discussion and interest. The school counselor felt that similar presentations and programs for 2002/2003 school year could be beneficial given the high interest and perceived need for this information.

A Bernie Wolfe school workshop was conducted on May 27 with staff. Attendees included 2 administrators and 32 teachers. Information on the project was given, such as guidelines and general information. Topics included general alcohol/drug information, AFM services, signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol use, and prevention strategies for early/middle years students. Information on affected children and community resources was also provided. Many handouts and resources were made available to participants. Staff raised questions about how to increase resiliency in children. Staff and administration expressed interest in the continuation of this project for the next school year.

Overall the workshops were well received by staff, students and parents. The information provided was seen as useful, and for many people was new. The school counselors were generally impressed with the variety of topics presented, but also indicated that more planning time was required in order to fully integrate the workshops into their schedules. They also expressed interest in continuing the project next year. Although there were a few concerns about the content presented by parents, it is clear that they benefit from information related to trying to cope with the changes that their adolescents are going through as they progress through high school. AFM may be able to provide some assistance when the issues are tied to addictions, however, a wider net may need to be cast to cover the additional skills required to deal with other issues.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

On June 6th, a focus group was conducted with the school counselors at the final Transcona-Springfield School Division Counselor's Meeting. This focus group was designed to ask the counselors several key questions about their perceptions of the project; its impacts and suggestions for improvement. The counselors were asked to voice their opinion about key project weaknesses and strengths, the impact of the project on capacity building with parents and students, the impact of the project on their own ability to capacity build with groups, build links with community groups, and to find resources. Counselors were also asked about the improvements that could be made to the project, how AFM could better assist this process in the future, and recommendations for continuation of the project given adequate resources.

The summary of the focus group results is presented as responses to the questions that were asked.

1. **Overall how do you think the project went?**

Generally everyone thought the project went well. Counselors felt that they were provided with more up to date materials than they had previously. These materials were seen as a 'time saver' since school staff did not have the time or resources to create these materials themselves. Many counselors said that the handouts provided at the workshops were **very** useful.

The Consultant, Michele Cadieux, was found to be very helpful and as someone who provided support whenever she was approached for requests. Many counselors had expressed appreciation for the accommodation efforts of the Consultant, noting specifically that the presentation topics were adapted to their needs.

The counselors felt that Michele had made the audiences feel comfortable in the workshops given to various groups. In this regard, there was special reference to making the students feel comfortable in workshops. This was thought to be important since students are a key group that the counselors deal with on a day-to-day basis. The workshops also addressed a large variety of groups at a number of schools; such as staff, administration, parents at parent-teacher nights, parents from the general community, special student groups, general student populations, and counselors.

2. **What types of things could have been added?**

Many counselors felt that more could have been added if there were fewer time constraints during this project. The majority of counselors stated that the most important addition could have been increased interaction between the Consultant and students, in both group and individuals settings. Other suggestions included having more parent workshops, team presentations (with either counselor or Consultant presenting), and more professional development time with the counselors.

3. **Are there some things that could have been left out or something that was not a priority?**

Generally, the counselors felt that there was nothing that could have been left out, and more that should have been done if there was not a time constraint issue. A few counselors mentioned that the time for the student sessions could have been adjusted to allow for more sessions to be held during classes rather than at lunch. The reasoning is that the rate of turnout could be increased if the workshops were made less visible, thus reducing the stigma associated with attending an 'AFM workshop'.

4. **What do you think were the most useful pieces (i.e., workshops, handouts, links with other community-based groups)?**

The most useful pieces included the various workshops and handouts given to counselors. Counselors mentioned some examples of notable workshops that included the gambling workshop given to the Natural Helpers group and the parent information session. The handouts were thought to be very appropriate. These resources reinforced previously learned information and introduced up-to-date information. A few individuals stated that the benefit is that these up-to-date resources are organized in a folder ready to be used quickly with student, staff and parents when the need arises.

5. **Did student groups get involved with the capacity-building process? Why or why not? How would you try to involve them in the future?**

Several student groups were thought to have been involved in the capacity building process. These groups include Natural Helpers and some students in a couple of the schools. Unfortunately, there was low turnout to some of the student workshops. Several counselors suggested that workshops be conducted during class-time.

6. **Were parent groups involved with the process? How could we get them involved in the future?**

Several parent groups were involved in the process. This included parents who saw the poster presentation at the parent-teacher night, and those that attended the parent information night. Despite the wide advertising, there was a low turn out for the parent information night, with only 40 registrations and 19 parents attending from 3 schools. Several counselors suggested that the presentations to parents be spaced out instead of holding multiple presentations during the same time slot. Then parents would have an opportunity to attend all presentations.

7. **Have you been able to link with other community groups that are involved in dealing with addictions? Student peer group? Student Assistance Program?**

Many of the counselors have been able to link with other community programs such as: AFM Youth, the Child Guidance counselors, Public Health, the Networkers interagency group (incl. Child and Family Services, Klinic).

8. **Do you think you will now be more able to provide more accurate information to kids and parents about addiction issues?**

The counselors stated that they are more confident in their abilities to deal with addictions, more able to provide more accurate information, and to build rapport with students and parents. There is also a sense that their confidence in their ability to find addiction-related resources in the community has increased. One counselor said that she now realizes that she doesn't need to be an expert to deal with addictions issues.

9. **Overall, what could have been done better?**

If not for the time constraint, many counselors felt much more could have been done. For example, there could have been increased work with student and parent groups. The planning of the project could have begun earlier, during May or June for a September start. An early planning for the project could have avoided problems associated with organizing workshops and meetings when staff agendas are rapidly being filled. The early planning could have also ensured that counselors had an opportunity to choose workshop topics for themselves, again enabling the worker to more adequately meet their needs. In addition, early planning before initiation of the project could have resulted in clearer expectations of the project, and a clarified role for the worker that included counselor input.

10. **How could the AFM (not the CONSULTANT) have been more effective or useful in assisting with this process?**

One counselor had stated that it was important to have AFM's support in the school division since their area that is served is far from AFM's downtown location, and having AFM supports in the community increases compliancy of students accessing help. It was also mentioned that a collaborative effort with AFM could foster a mentorship. This mentorship would be designed to help counselors learn to gain skills or 'hands-on-training' in dealing with group and individual sessions. Another suggestion was the production of a video, to be used as a training resource for counselors, of an AFM youth group session illustrating group dynamics.

Another suggestion at this time was that AFM assist in the development of a school division policy on alcohol and drug use.

11. **If resources were available would you recommend that this program continue? Why or why not? If yes, what are the priorities?**

The counselors stated that they recommend the program continue, but in a full-year format.
The priorities include having adequate early planning, and making the position full-time. This would enable staff to have input into the development of specific workshops and the consultant could have more 'hands on' contact with students and parent groups.

The Consultant could also have a significant impact on the development of school division policy with regard to alcohol and drug use, and to ensure that the policy is congruent with the best practices of addressing student substance use.

SUMMARY

Reports from students, parents and counsellors overwhelmingly suggest that this project has had a positive impact. School counsellors especially, suggested that the resources that they received are very useful. The written material is more up to date that what they had previously, and they learned about other community groups that also deal with addictions. The school counsellors felt that they are now better positioned to provide accurate addiction related information to their community. These findings show strong support for the development of the school division capacity, therefore the main goal of the program has been achieved.

This main concern that school counsellors had with respect to the project was that it took quite a while to get going. Since the PEC was not hired until after the New Year, opportunities to link with planned information sessions in the spring term were missed. However, the PEC's flexibility in adjusting to various demands for workshops and presentations was noted as a positive characteristic of the project. An additional concern that was expressed by school counsellors was that they would also liked to have the PEC provide clinical services within the schools. Although some counsellors felt that their skills and knowledge about addiction were improved, they still felt that they needed a clinical resource to provide more of the urgent care that may be required.

Parents also told us that they benefited from the information that was provided. Although there were fewer parent information sessions, the information that was provided was generally seen as relevant and useful. However, some parents expressed a desire for more factual information about street drugs, and were surprised with a presentation about how to effectively communicate with their adolescent about drug use. The opportunity to make presentations at parent advisory councils was also missed because of the late planning. Agendas were already set by the time the worker was on-board and ready to make presentations.

The student workshops were quite small, as attendance may have suffered from the variety of other activities that were occurring at the school. This is another example of how early planning might have helped to identify a better time to present this material. At the point in the school year when these workshops were being conducted intramural sports activities were intense. Furthermore, by having the workshops over lunchtime many students may not have come for fear of being identified as a drug user. School counsellors have since suggested putting some workshops on drug education during class time, when it will be seen as more a regular education program. Nevertheless, the students who did attend the workshops found them quite helpful, and a lot of discussion about addiction issues was generated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The **partnership between the school division and AFM should continue**, as AFM is able to co-ordinate and deliver prevention and education services, services that school divisions are frequently seeking out. Were an on-going partnership established, school-based counseling services should be included if possible, as a significantly higher number of students will probably access services if these are offered closer to home.

2. Given the number of schools that were involved, and the potential to offer direct client services, it is clear that **adequate resources need to be allocated** if the project is to include both rehabilitation and counseling with students, and capacity building with the staff. The goal of this pilot, however, was focused on building the capacity of the School Division to deal with alcohol/drug/gambling issues. However, the gap in the delivery of service could reasonably be met by adding resources to the position. This gap was identified by a variety of sources within the Division and may be more acute in the area served by the Transcona-Springfield School Division, as the students do not have easy access to services, and are unwilling to travel the substantial distance to the downtown AFM youth community-based services location on Osborne Street North.

3. Both school and AFM staff identified the need to **begin planning early** in the school year, if not before. May and June are the best months in which to plan activities for the fall. Early planning would facilitate the early identification of expectations of the worker and annual project goals and objectives. In the current project, because the planning occurred after the pilot project was underway, the goals and objectives were not clear when the worker was hired. This resulted in some confusion as to her role (treating at risk kids or helping counselors develop resources and skills) and delayed the implementation of educational sessions until almost half way through the project. However, in all fairness, this particular school division was undergoing a major reorganization (amalgamation), therefore, it is much to their credit that they were able to take on this project and complete it successfully during a time of such uncertainty and rapid change.

4. In a similar vein, the **supports and opportunities to liaise** within the school system **need to begin the previous school year** in order to use the worker's time most effectively. Presentations and workshops designed to improve staff and parent capacity to deal with addictions can then be integrated into the usual staff development days, parental advisory committees and community support networks. The linking with outside agencies can then proceed more efficiently with this groundwork completed beforehand.

5. **School policies** with regard to alcohol and drug use **should be reviewed** to provide both school staff and AFM staff with consistent guidelines as to expected student behavior and related consequences should expectations not be met. AFM staff could assist in the process of policy development by sharing other comprehensive Divisional policies that might be helpful to TSSD in their review process.

Appendix A

Instruments for counselor and parent feedback following workshops

Staff/Counselor Feedback

Please circle the answers that best reflect your feelings about this session/workshop.

Did you find the information in these sessions helpful/relevant?

Not Very A little Somewhat Very

How much new information did you learn about youth, alcohol, other drugs or gambling?

Not much A little Some A lot

Will you be able to use any of the information to help students make healthy choices about drugs?

Not really (no) I think so (yes)

Do you have a better idea of resources that are available in your community than you had before these sessions?

Yes No

Did the sessions meet your expectations?

Not really A little Somewhat Very much

If not, why?_____

_____

What information could be added to help make these sessions more useful to you?

_____

_____

_____

Are there other topics related to alcohol, other drugs or gambling that you would like to see covered by sessions like this in the future?

_____

_____

_____

Parent Feedback

Please circle the answers that best reflect your feelings about this session/workshop.

Did you find the information in this session helpful/relevant?

Not Very A little Somewhat Very

How much new information did you learn about youth, alcohol, other drugs or gambling?

Not much A little Some A lot

Will you be able to use any of the information to help your child make healthy choices about drugs?

Not really (no) I think so (yes)

Did the session meet your expectations?

Not really A little Somewhat Very much

If not, why?_____

_____

What information could be added to help make this session more useful to you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are there other topics related to alcohol, other drugs or gambling that you would like to see covered by sessions like this in the future?

_____

_____

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